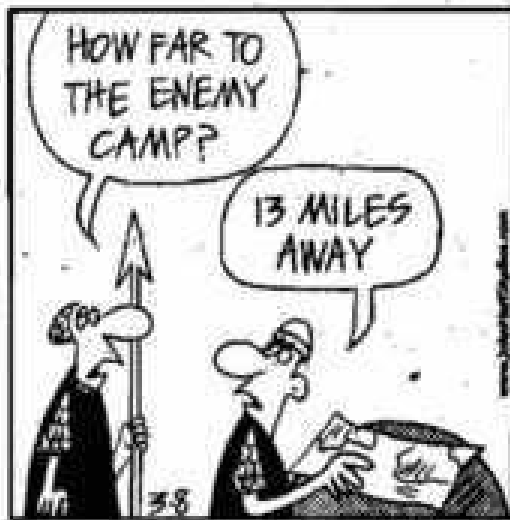


Soviet COIN in Afghanistan

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BY RICHARD FURNO—THE WASHINGTON POST

Pre-War Afghanistan

- One of the more liberal Islamic countries —*purdah* rare in cities
- Weak central government (kingdom) with political power residing primarily locally among tribal, village, extended family and *qwam* leaders
- Mullahs and Imam have religious authority but no political leadership

- Pushtu majority with Tadjik, Uzbek, Nuristani, and Hazara minorities
- Sunni Muslim except Hazara, who are Shia. Strong Sufi influence
- 10% literacy rate
- Traditional warrior society with a tradition of independence
- Primarily rural country with agriculture and herding providing bulk of employment
- No railroad, limited road network

The world of the 1970s

- West in retreat before communism and nationalism--Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Angola, Ethiopia, Iran, Middle East, Chile, El Salvador, Argentina
- Kissinger talks of nation in decline making the best deal it can
- US losing leadership of free world—Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter

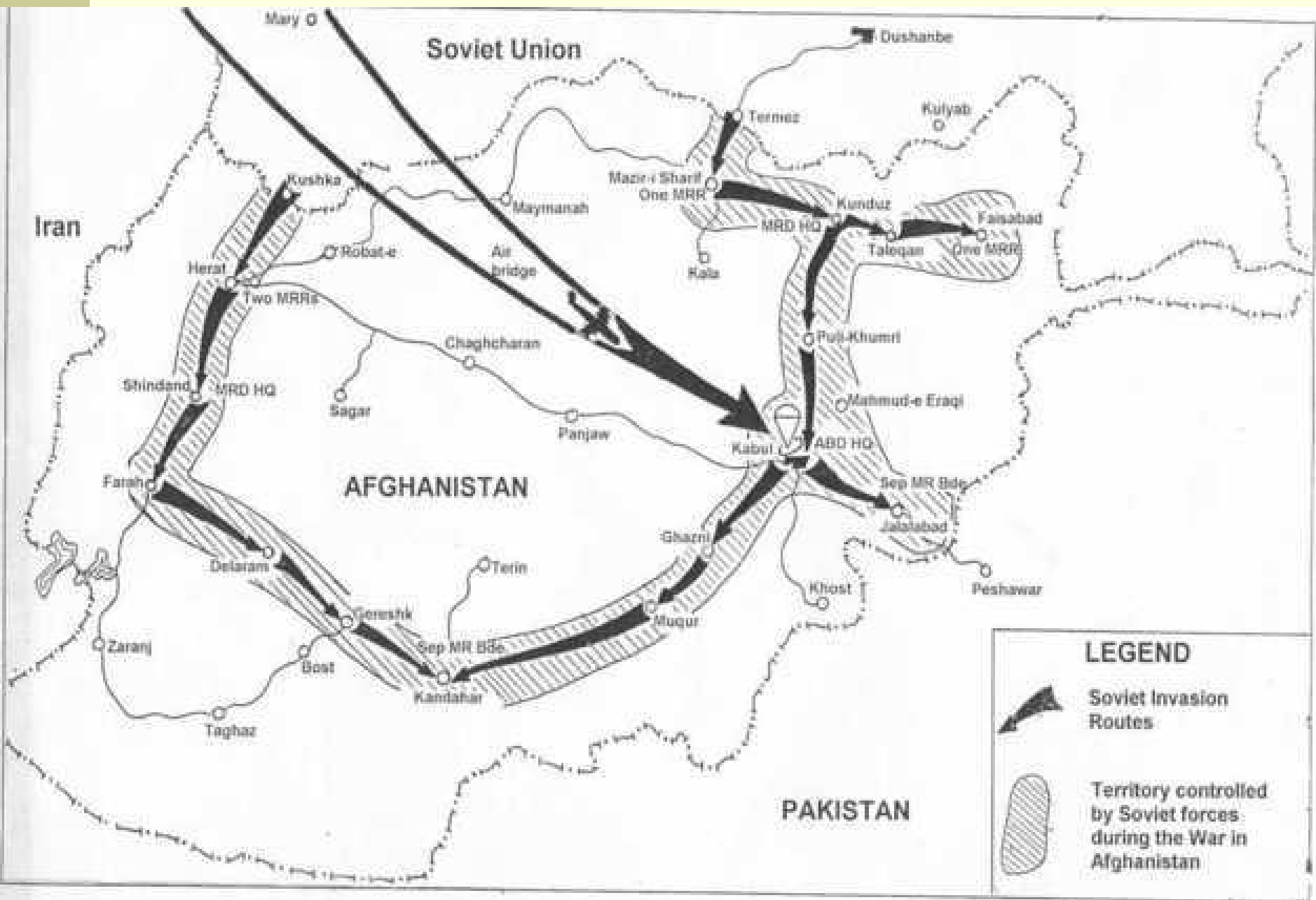
- Soviet Union and China in ascendancy
- Soviet and Chinese internationalists in Cuba, Vietnam, Laos, Ethiopia, Angola, Egypt, Syria, Latin America, Mozambique, Congo
- Support to revolutionary cells in West Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Japan
- Financial aid to Western communist parties including CPUSA
- Espionage penetration of West

Soviet penetration of Afghanistan

- Military, political and economic advisers throughout DRA
- Soviet squadron flying aircraft with Afghan markings and wear Afghan uniforms
- “Muslim” battalion body guards to President
- KGB Spetsnaz bodyguards, cooks, doctors to President
- Incursion under guise of military assistance

24 December 1979 invasion

- Babrak Karmal put in power
- Soviet plan to restore situation, let DRA do fighting and withdraw bulk of force within two years
- Soviets find themselves in the middle of a civil war on rugged terrain with extended LOC carrying the primary combat mission against a guerrilla enemy



Battle for control of logistics

- 85% of Soviet force tied to LOC, garrison, city security. Bulk of fighting by airborne, air assault, Spetsnaz and Separate Motorized Rifle Brigades
- Soviet airpower useless against Mujahideen, so used to devastate countryside and depopulate the rural areas

- Mujahideen forced to establish series of logistics depots, dumps and supply points
- Spetsnaz primary mission is counter caravan ambush
- Mujahideen attempt to strangle Soviets through attacks on convoys, pipelines and relief columns

Soviet Four Phases of War

- December 1979-February 1980
 - Introduction & garrisoning of Soviet forces, secure LOCS, airfields, cities
- March 1980-April 1985
 - Force build-up, operational approach changing to tactical, bloodiest fighting
- April 1985-April 1986
 - Peak strength, yet shift to DRA conduct of war in October with National Reconciliation Program
- May 1986-February 1989
 - Afghanization and withdrawal

Eternal truths in Afghanistan

- Never a fight “to the knife”. When the battle is lost, kick out the rear guard & go to the mountains
- Seasonal fighting begins with spring thaw in April, slows down for heat of July, resumes September-November
- Switching sides is common
- Loyalty can be rented for a small bag of gold

Funneling aid to the Mujahideen

- US, Britain, China, Saudi Arabia, UAE through Pakistan ISIS
- Iranian aid through Iran
- US/British aid in the form of physical supplies, weapons and ammunition
- Saudi Arabian and UAE aid in cash

Pakistan's concerns

- Soviet presence on border would be permanent
- Pashtunistan issue
- India is primary threat
- Large refugee presence in Northwest Frontier Province
- Opportunity to modernize armed forces

The Pakistan Funnel

- All aid funneled through seven Afghan religious-based factions—three moderate and four fundamentalist
- All Mujahideen had to join one of the factions to receive aid—bulk of aid through most extreme—and anti-US of the factions
- Pakistan wanted most implacable element to lead fight for generations
- Took power and prestige from natural leaders and transferred it to the religious extremists

Aid in Cash or Kind

- US afraid of graft and theft, so issued supplies, weapons and ammunition
- What is available is not always what is needed, so ends up sold in bazaars for needed items
- Mujahideen are unpaid volunteers, so best captured material ended up sold to support families

- Issue items had to be transported to the Mujahideen group. Transport fees not included in US aid
- Most items needed were for sale in Afghanistan's bazaars
- Cash easier to carry

Dealing with the teamsters

- No scab carriers
- 10% toll on goods per tribal area
- Soviet air and artillery do free fire on mules and camels
- Carrier fee includes replacement on lost mules and camels
- Hardship bands don't get repeat carriers

Results

- 1.3-1.5 million Afghans dead, 5.5 million refugees and 2 million internal refugees
- Afghan society torn apart and warlords and mullahs left in charge
- Country goes from liberal to arch-fundamentalist orientation
- The educated and moderate have fled in a world-wide Diaspora

Lessons Learned

- Guerrilla war is a contest of endurance and national will. The side with the highest moral commitment will hold the ground at conflict's end. For the guerrilla, battle field victory is almost irrelevant.
- Air domination is irrelevant unless precisely targeted
- Secure logistics and LOC essential
- Conventional tactics, equipment and weapons require major adjustment or replacement

- Conventional war force structure inappropriate
- Tanks of limited value. Light infantry and engineers at a premium
- Medical support paramount
- Logistics determines the scope of activity and force size either side can field
- Information battle essential to maintaining external support

What the Soviets did right

- Realized that they were in a mountain war and expanded mountain training facilities from one to seven and sent all combat soldiers through mountain training prior to deployment.
- Fought in the deep mountains with lengthy ambushes.
- Effective use of agent nets.
- Built a large support base among 1000s sent to USSR for training
- Effective withdrawal operation

What the Soviets did wrong

- Overreliance on aviation and technology
- Conscript NCO corps
- Bulk of force in security, not contesting control in districts and villages
- Sporadic hearts and minds campaign
- Imposed Soviet-appropriate training on DRA armed forces rather than adapting to Afghan culture
- Took over the fight from the DRA
- MRDs roadbound

Soviet COIN Evolution

- Protect from foreign incursion and let DRA fight Mujahideen
- Conduct conventional operations
- Conduct tactical combat and upgrade DRA
- Pass fight to DRA
- Withdraw but continue support

Soviet Advisers-Comintern tradition

- Political advisers-Central Committee 80 advisers & 50 translators. 50 Komsomol advisers to DOMA.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs advisers
- MOD advisers
 - GRU advisers
- KGB advisers
- MVD advisers
- Technical specialists

Adviser Missions

- Rebuild state institutions, improve party cohesion and relationship with population, conduct agricultural reform.
- Train and assist militaries of DRA
- Build or repair factories, mines, natural gas extraction
- Seed, fertilizer, sugar, oil, agricultural products and transport
- Identify and facilitate training of thousands of Afghans in USSR

KGB & GRU Advisers best prepared

- Two years Dari or Farsi, Afghan history, economy, culture, customs, traditions, religion. Translators with Pashtu.
- Doubled as operatives. Ran highly effective agent nets that penetrated most Mujahideen groups. Commo problem.
- Ran cooption and buy-off programs

MOD Advisers

- Separate military and GRU organizations
- From Afghan General Staff to separate battalion level.
- Accompanied conscription press gangs.
- Conducted MEDCAPs and county fair.
- Calls for fire from Soviet aviation and artillery
- Interface with 40th Army

Colonel Shershnev to Konstantin Chernenko in 1984

- “The operations have become of a political character, with punitive measures, and as a result we have been pulled in to a war with the people with no prospects of a positive outcome. Inhumane acts by Soviet troops with regard to the peaceful population are widespread and systematic and manifest themselves in the form of robbery, unjustified and unfounded use of firearm, destruction of villages, dishonoring of mosques.”

General Varennikov, March 1988

- “Our army is not just a warrior with a sword. It is a political warrior...over the last year, meetings between Soviet and Afghan soldiers have ceased, as have those of Soviet soldiers and the population”

Advisers KIA

- KGB 572
- MVD 28
- Ministry of Film, Radio and Construction
20
- MOD advisers not separated from
13,833 MOD KIA

BREAK TIME!!

110



The Soviets were not defeated and driven out of Afghanistan

- Soviet withdrawal was a Soviet political decision
- Soviets 1988-1989 withdrawal was coordinated, deliberate and professional
- Soviets left behind a functioning government, an improved military and an advisory and economic effort insuring the continued viability of the government.
- The withdrawal was based on a coordinated diplomatic, economic and military plan permitting Soviet forces to withdraw in good order and the Afghan government to survive.

- The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) held on despite the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Only then, with the loss of Soviet support and the increased efforts by the Mujahideen and Pakistan, did the DRA slide toward defeat in April 1992.

- From 1979-1989, the Soviet 40th Army conducted 220 independent operations and over 400 combined operations. Many large-scale operations accomplished little, since this was primarily a tactical commanders' war. Three large-scale operations, the initial incursion into Afghanistan, Operation Magistral and the final withdrawal, were the most effective operations of the war--the force and supporting measures employed were appropriate to the mission.

- The Soviet effort to withdraw in good order was well executed and is a model for other

Twilight of the General Secretaries

- General Secretary Brezhnev was incapacitated in 1980, but did not die until 1982.
- Yuri Andropov, who replaced Brezhnev in 1982, was also in poor health and died in 1984.
- Andropov was replaced by the elderly and ill Konstantin Chernenko who died in March 1985.
- Mikhail Gorbachev came to power and imposed a one-year deadline for making the military approach work.

- 1985 was the bloodiest year of fighting and the Mujahideen were close to defeat.

- The Soviets could not win the war without a massive troop buildup and severe international and internal repercussions. Unwilling to pay this price, Gorbachev opted to withdraw Soviet forces from Afghanistan—in good order. Accordingly, at the February 1986 Party Congress, he announced plans to “Afghanize” the conflict and to intensify negotiations for withdrawal.

The Diplomatic Plan—Stonewalling 1980-1986

- UN resolution 14 January 1980—
Rejected
- Non-Aligned movement—use Cuba,
India and DRA to block resolutions
- UN peace talks February 1981-1986—
negotiate to stonewall

The Diplomatic Plan—Negotiating Stance

- The Mujahideen would not have any standing in the negotiations and the United States and Pakistan were to represent their concerns.
- Iran would not take part in the negotiations.
- The future of the DRA Communist regime was nonnegotiable and its stability was the precondition to Soviet withdrawal.
- Bilateral pact between Pakistan and the DRA, with the United States and the Soviet Union as guarantors. US & Pakistan would not interfere with DRA

■ Final agreement, signed on 14 April 1988. The United States and other nations would cease providing armaments and training to the Mujahideen, and Pakistan would deny the Mujahideen sanctuary and camps, but the Soviet Union was permitted to continue providing economic and military aid to the DRA. This aid would be significant—an estimated three to four billion dollars a year. Afghanistan was already the fifth largest arms importer in the world

Getting DRA ready for withdrawal

- Babrak Karmal
 - Exile Khalqis
 - Project Islamic image on Communist state
 - Fight counterinsurgency
 - Stronger links with tribal and ethnic groups
 - Stronger economic and political ties with USSR

Dumping Karmal

- Lazy, unhealthy, drinking problem and fighting withdrawal.
- Najibullah, head of Khad, was Moscow's new man. Karmal resigns under pressure March 1986. Moscow gives Najibullah two years to get his country in order.

Najibullah Maneuvers

- November 1986—new constitution, multi-party, Islamic legal system
- December 1986—National Reconciliation Program
- November 1987—New constitution, DRA now Republic of Afghanistan
- November 1987—Loya Jirga to approve constitution & presidency

Strength DRA MOD Forces

- 132,000-actually 52,000 with annual desertions reaching 32,000
- Army: 14 Divisions, 1 Air Assault Bde, 3 Tank Bdes, 1 Arty Bde, 2 Commandant's Service Bdes, 9 Separate Regiments.
- Frontier Service: 7 Bdes, 2 Rgts, 65 Bns
- Air Force: 12 Combat Avn Sqdns, 5 Transport Sqdns, 9 Helicopter Sqdns
- Air Defense: 1 Air Defense Missile Bde

Armed Forces of the Minister of the Interior (Sarandoy)

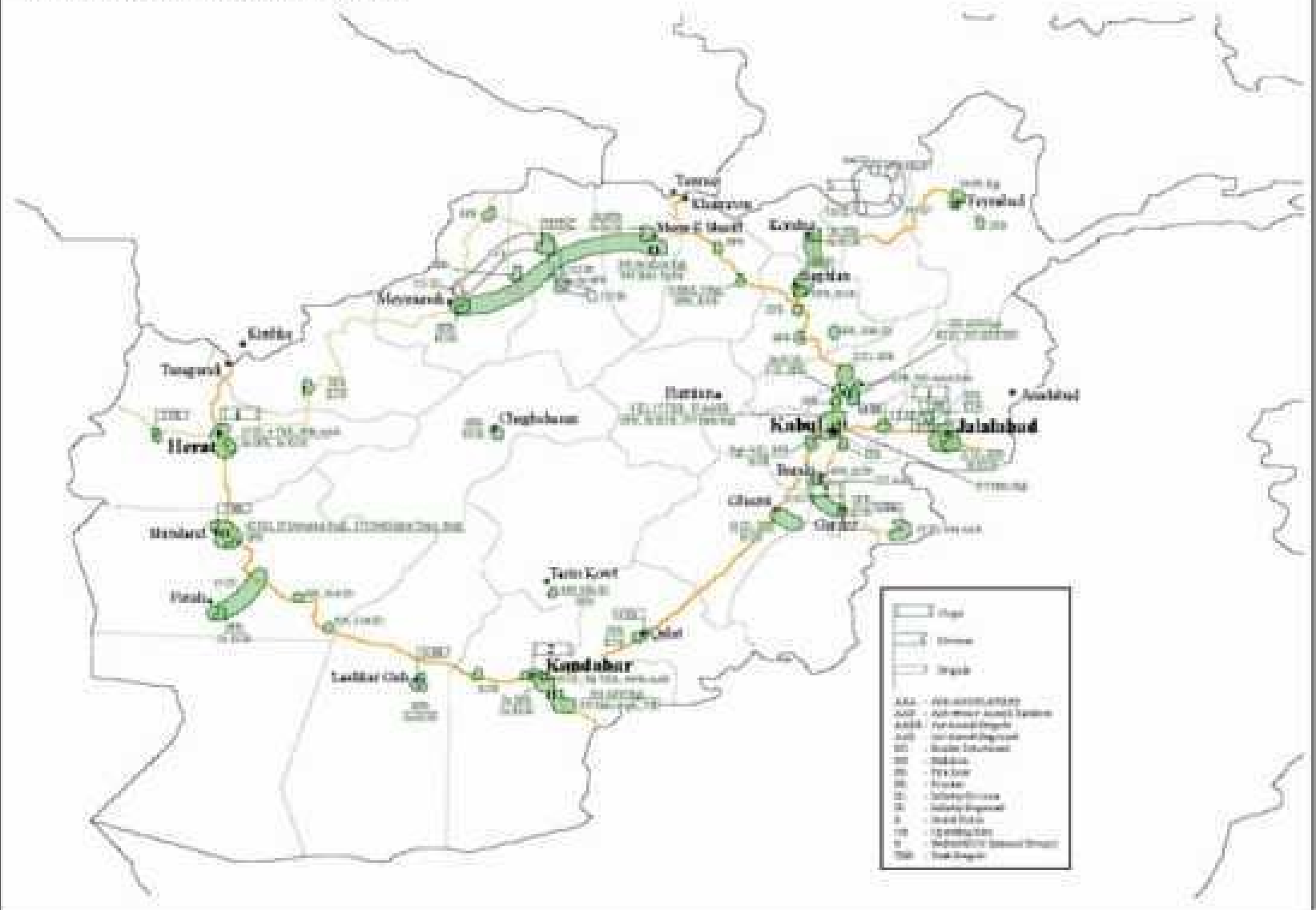
- Total strength authorized 100,000—actual 70,000.
- 50 Combat Bns, 95 Separate companies, 5 Garrison Bdes, 2 Garrison Rgts.

Armed Forces of the Ministry of State Security (KHAD)

- Authorized 100,000. 100,000 on hand
- 3 Combat Brigades, 23 Separate Combat Battalions, 82 Separate Combat Companies, 10 Special Purpose Regiments, 43 Separate Special Purpose Battalions

- Paper strength 302,000, actual strength 202,000
- Both the Armed Forces of the Ministry of Interior and State Security are larger than those of the Ministry of Defense
- At the end of 1988, the Soviets estimated Mujahideen strength at 4,530 detachments and groups with a total of 173,000 personnel. Of these, 1,920 of the detachments and groups were full-time (82,300 personnel). DRA had numerical superiority, but not 10-to-1 recommended

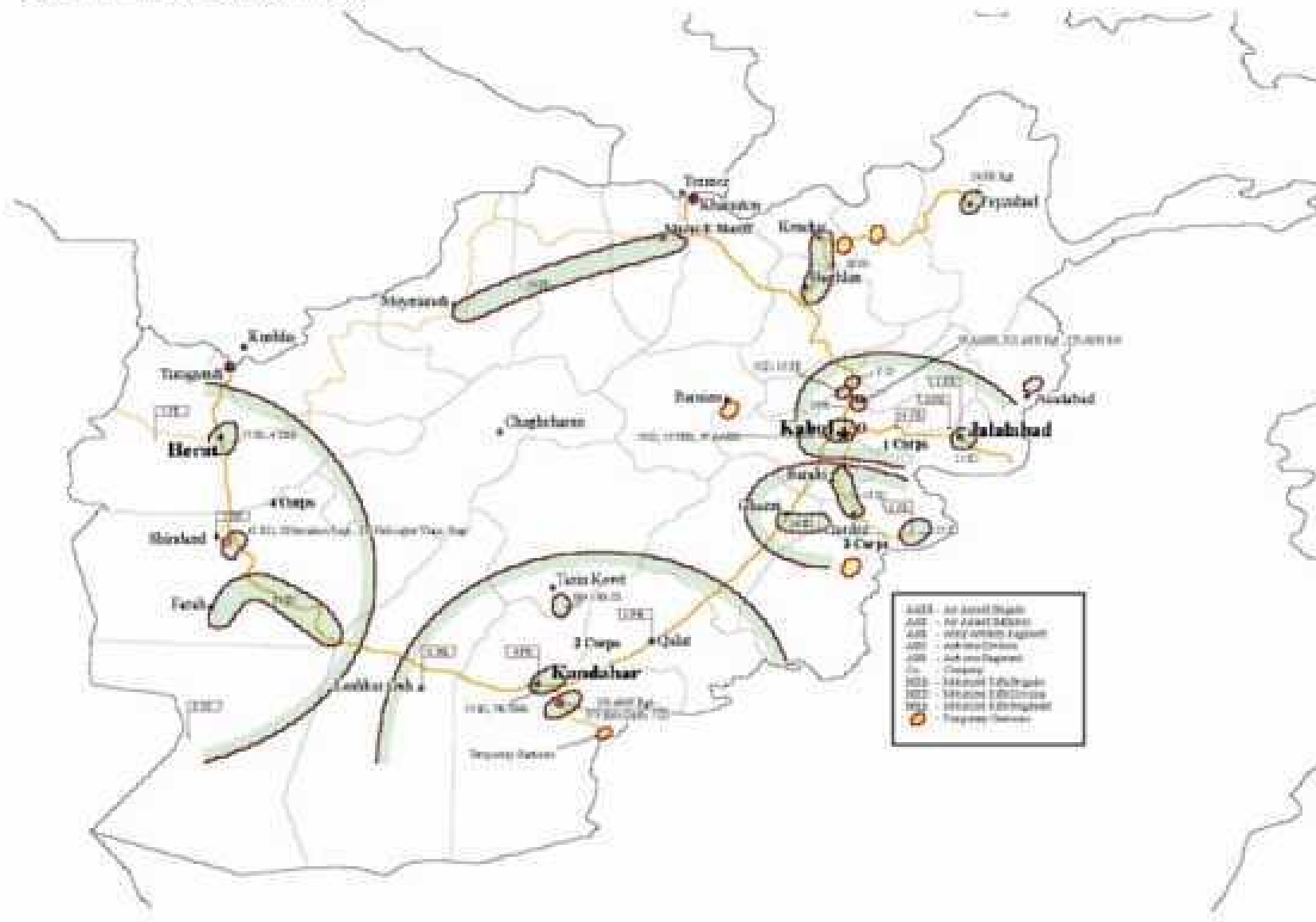
DRA before 15 November 1988



Covering the loss of Soviet forces

- Shift forces
- Form 5 new divisions in Balkh Province to cover the northern approach to Salang tunnel
- Prevent Mujahideen from capturing a city (attempts at Jalalabad and Faizabad, temporary success at Konduz)

DRA on 15 November 1988



Getting Ivan home

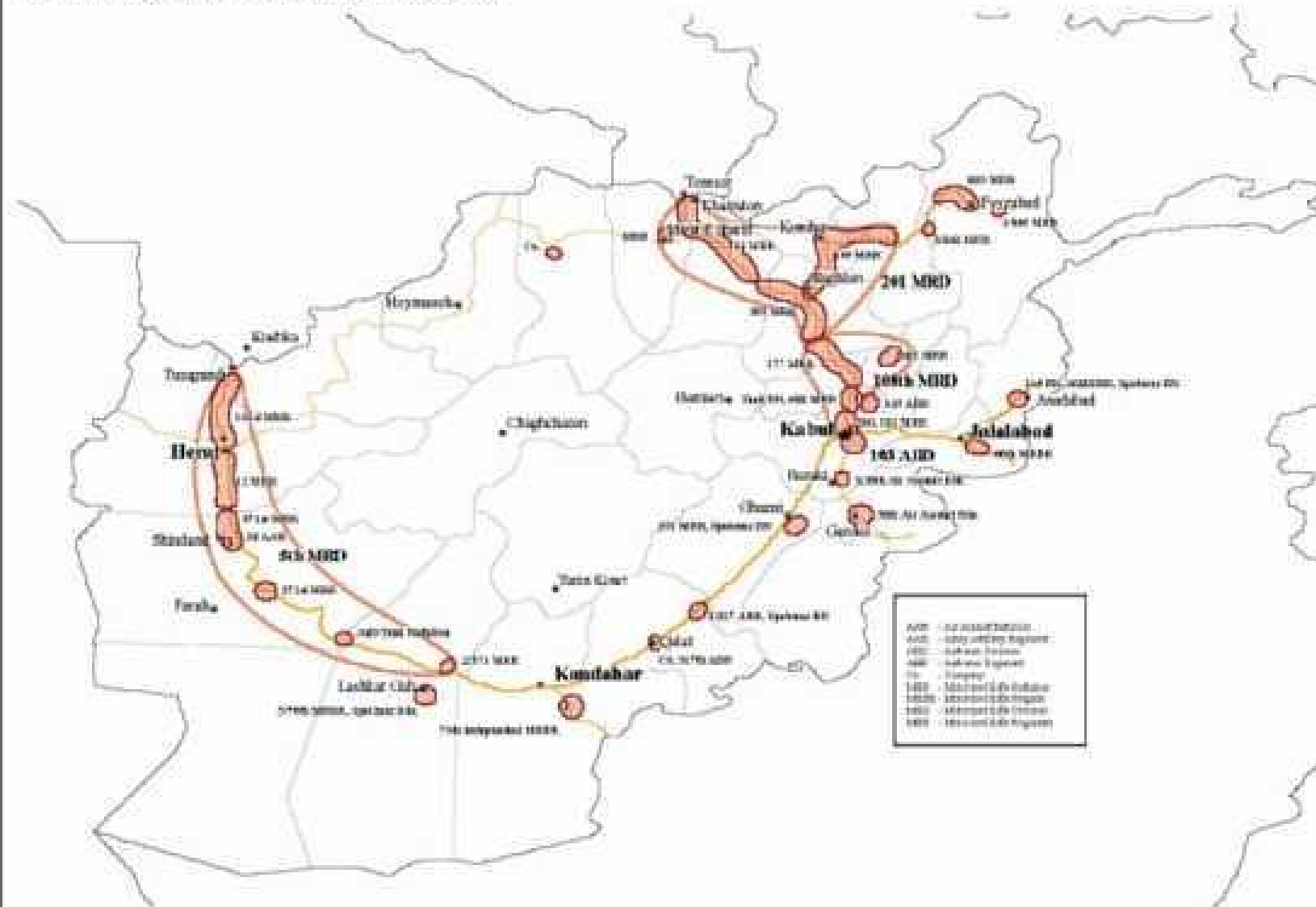
- On 7 April 1988 (a week before the Geneva Accords were signed), the Soviet Ministry of Defense issued the order for withdrawal
- Order based on plan developed by the General Staff, the Operational Group of the Ministry of Defense deployed in the DRA, the staff of the Turkmenistan Military District and the 40th Army staff.
- Troop strength down from 124,000 to 100,300.

Two Phases

- First phase 15 May-15 August 1988. During the April-early May period, the Soviets withdrew their small garrisons at Asadabad, Gul'bakhar, Bamian, Baraki, Chagcharan and Shadzhoy into parent units. Withdrew 50,000 troops from ten major garrisons and completely withdrew from Jalalabad, Ghazni, Gardez, Lashkargah and Kandahar cities.
- Second phase began in December 1988 and ran until 15 February 1989.



40th Army Prior to Start of Withdrawal



Soviet 40th Army-Ground

- 5th, 108th 201st Motorized Rifle Divisions
- 103rd Airborne Division
- 66th & 70th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigades
- 191st & 860th Separate Motorized Rifle Regiments
- 345th Separate Airborne Regiment
- 56th Air Assault Regiment
- 15th and 22nd Spetsnaz Brigades

Soviet 40th Army

	Total	Western Corridor	Eastern Corridor
Personnel (thousands)	100.3	42.8	57.5
Headquarters personnel	3.6	0.8	2.8
Combat personnel	70.7	34.3	36.5
Support & Service Support personnel	14.3	2.4	11.9
Total Combat Battalions	93	21	72
Bns securing cities & facilities	40	7	33
Bns securing LOCs	15	4	11
Bns reinforcing LOC & facilities	9	2	7
Bns on Convoy Escort	3	1	2
Bns securing facilities & plants	5		5
Bns available for combat	30	8	22

Soviet 40th Army-Air

- One aviation regiment
- One fighter regiment
- One independent ground attack regiment
- One separate composite aviation regiment
- Three separate helicopter regiments
- Seven helicopter squadrons

Phase I Route Security

- Combat forces to supplemental security and blocking positions. Some 10,000-12,000 Soviet and DRA forces covered the withdrawal of the 3,000-plus 66th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade from Jalalabad to Kabul. Some 100,000 Soviet and DRA troops covered the rest of the 66th withdrawal route from Kabul to Khariton.
- Additional artillery and aviation support on the routes. Illumination aircraft stayed on station over the night-lagers.

Jalalabad-1st Garrison handover

- 66th MRB left a three-month reserve of ammunition, fuel and food. Barracks mess halls, steam baths and hospital repaired. Weapons and equipment repaired and tested by Afghan MOD inspectors
- On the morning of 14 May, 1988, the Afghan 1st Corps Commander signed for the garrison and the entire 66th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade left Jalalabad by convoy heading toward Kabul and eventually home.

- Everything stripped and sold. DRA 1st Corps Commander requested urgent resupply from Najibullah stating that the three-month reserve of ammunition, fuel and food had not been left. The 1st Corps Commander had personally signed for it.
- The 40th Army now insisted that an MOD official sign for property and material and they videotaped the entire transfer procedure of inspection and acceptance

Transfers

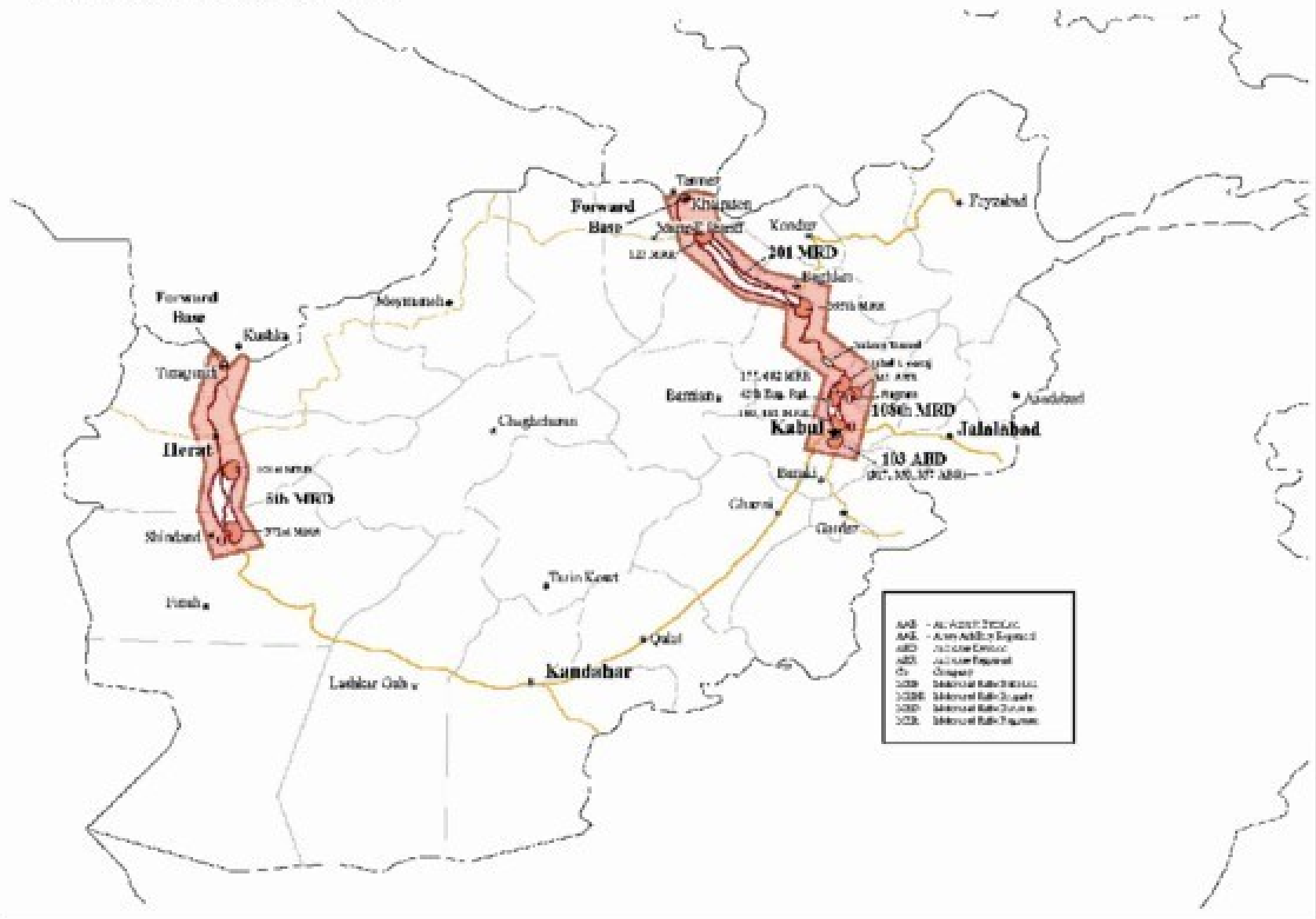
- Soviets transferred 184 garrisons worth 699 million rubles and transferred government equipment worth 98.3 million rubles.
- Three-month reserves of ammunition, fuel and food to the DRA at Kandahar, Gardez, Kabul, Konduz, Herat, Faizabad and Shindand. The three-month reserves constituted over 85,000 tons of material including 13,269 tons of artillery rounds, 3,570 tons of aviation fuel, 24,320 tons of vehicle fuel and 27,074 tons of food.

■ In addition to the three month reserves, the 40th Army transferred another 55,500 tons of material to the DRA. This included 15,000 tons of ammunition, 3,000 tons of food and 37,500 tons of fuel. The 40th Army transferred some 990 armored vehicles, some 3000 trucks, 142 artillery howitzers and cannons, 82 mortars, 43 multiple rocket launchers, 231 air defense systems, 14,443 small arms and 1706 rocket launchers to the Afghan armed forces

Adjustment to Phase I

- Soviet forces remain in Herat and Shindand in Western corridor. Konduz evacuated in East instead to get to 50,100. UN certified.
- Setting an exact timetable for withdrawal, without tying the timetable to the achievement and maintenance of specific political and military conditions, is a recipe for trouble.

40th Army on 15 October 1988



Soviet 40th Army on 15 October 1988

- 5th, 108th, 201st Motorized Rifle Divisions
- Operational control of 103rd Airborne Division, 345th Separate Airborne Regiment
- Army Aviation: 120th Aviation Regiment; 134th Fighter Regiment; 378th Separate Composite Aviation Regiment, 263rd Separate Aerial Reconnaissance Squadron; 254th, 262nd, 302nd Separate Helicopter Squadrons.

Soviet Army on 15 October 1988

	Total	Western Corridor	Eastern Corridor
Personnel (thousands)	50.1	10.1	40
Headquarters personnel	2.4	0.4	2.0
Combat personnel	29.2	6.7	22.5
Support & Service Support personnel	18.5	3	15.5
Total Combat Battalions	56	10	46
Bns securing cities & facilities	29	6	23
Bns securing LOCs	15	3	12
Bns on Convoy Escort	2		2
Bns securing facilities & plants	5		5
Bns available for combat	5	1	4

Things get messy

- Mujahideen attacks on Jalalabad, Faizabad & Konduz
- Pakistan & US continue to support Mujahideen
- Najibullah requests that 20,000 Soviet volunteers remain behind to secure the Kabul airfield and the road between Kabul and Khariton
- Stabilize urban population. 15,000 tons of flour flown into Kabul monthly.
- Withdrawal stops November & December

Four options

- retain one Soviet division in country (11,000 personnel) to keep the LOC open between Khariton and Kabul;
- -withdraw Soviet forces while replacing them with United Nations forces to secure the LOC and provide food and fuel (non-starter);
- -complete the withdrawal of Soviet forces, then reintroduce Soviet regiments to escort the convoys;
- -do not complete the withdrawal, but retain Soviet volunteers to secure the LOCs. Pay the volunteers 800-1,000 rubles a month.

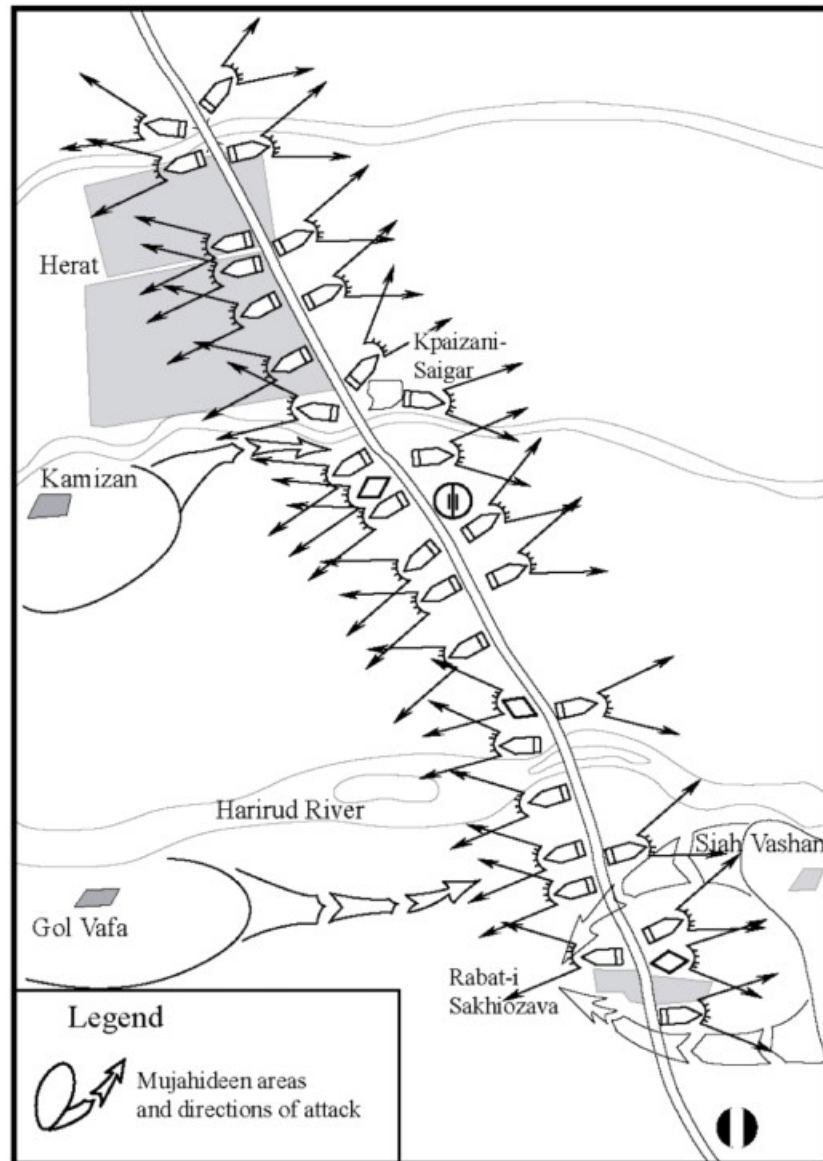
Getting back on track

- 5th variant—completing the withdrawal, while hiring Afghan militias to protect the LOCs
- Withdrawal resumes on 2 January in dead of winter. 30,000 troops through Salang tunnel (4,300 meters alt) in snow & ice.
- Transfer of SCUDs to Khad
- Failure to include Mujahideen in negotiations means 315 Soviet POWs left unaccounted for.

Route Security

- Truce with Masood. Najibullah insists on double cross & Yazov orders Gromov to comply. 23-25 January “Operation Typhoon”
- Gromov last man out on 15 February 1989





Information Operations

- Opened Afghanistan to coverage by more than the journalists of the Soviet Union, Warsaw Pact and Third World. Included in the 212 accredited journalists were 22 Western journalists from Australia, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, Italy, Japan, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. APN, TASS and GOSTELRADIO provided coverage for the Soviet Union with ten correspondents

- The journalists were allowed far greater access than in the past.
- Some Soviet journalists rode out with the troops, but the bulk had to be content with the 14 May press conference in Kabul and then being flown to the Soviet border locations of Khariton and Termez to witness the return of Soviet forces to the Soviet

Aftermath

- 600 truck weekly convoy to USSR for supplies plus air bridge
- Tanai revolt 2-7 March 1990
- Siege of Jalalabad April-June 1990
- End of Soviet Union 31 December 1991
- Fall of Kabul 27 April 1992

Bottom line

- Withdrawal from counter-insurgency should not be viewed as a defeat or a chance to get rid of an unpleasant nuisance. Creating bloodbaths and calling them progress is more than cynical and self-serving. It is an abrogation of humanity. The interest and investment in a country does not end with the withdrawal of forces. Rather, the elevated economic and political effort in support of the host government should remain if it is to survive and to prevent chaos.

Counterinsurgency 101

- Census
- Deny sanctuary. Pakistan is one issue but why won't we go into the mountains?
- Curb close air support. We are creating opposition through airpower.
- It's their country. Give them more of the lead. Encourage competent, representative leadership.
- Work in the context of their culture, not ours.



The Taliban is not our chief problem

- It's bad governance
- The Karzai government has lost the confidence of much of the people. It must regain this confidence without looking as if it is the pocket of the United States
- The solution is political and economic, with military support

The best thing we have going
for us is Afghan war
weariness..

- The worst thing is that we are foreigners
and we are running out of time





The Bear Went Over the Mountain

Source: <http://www.fishbase.org>

Leah W. Christ



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN:

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THE RUSSIAN GENERAL STAFF

1990

The SOVIET- AFGHAN WAR

WATER & SUPPLEMENT FEEDING AND LIGHT

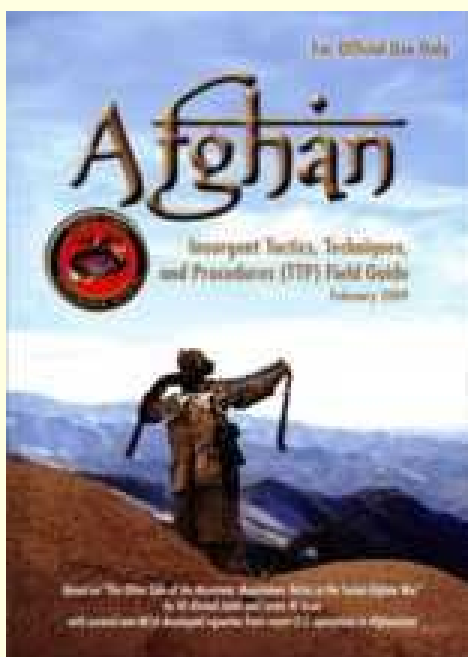


آن سوی گود



Afghanistan

Important Facts, Techniques, and Procedures (ITF) Field Guide



**המלחמה
הסובייטית
באפגניסטן**

ליסטר גראם
סימאלי גראם

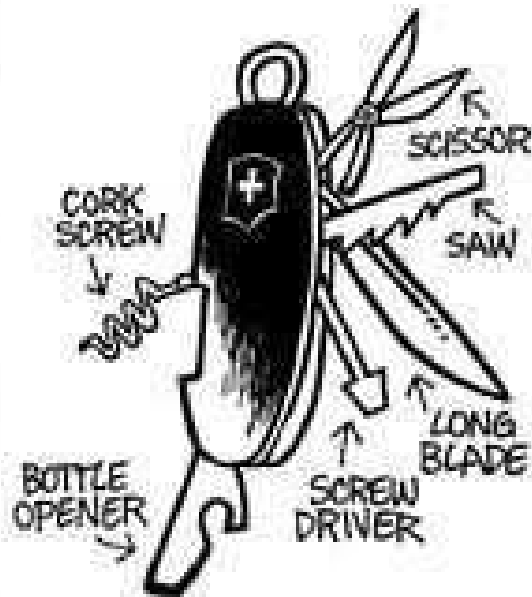


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SWISS ARMY KNIFE



WILLIE PETERS

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US ARMY KNIFE



